DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 071 053 CS 000 314

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TITLE Quantity, Quality, and Variety of Pupil Responses during an Open-Communication Structured Group Directed Reading-Thinking Activity and a Closed Communication Structured Group Directed Reading Activity.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Assn. (16th, Atlantic City, April 1971)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Critical Thinking; *Directed Reading Activity; *Grade 4; Group Reading; Reading; *Reading Instruction; Reading Level; Reading Materials; *Reading Research

ABSTRACT

The quality, quantity, and variety of pupil responses while using two different group directed reading activities, the Directed Reading Activity (DRA), and the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) were investigated in this study. The subjects, all fourth graders in two nearby communities, were grouped into above-grade-level, at-grade-level, or below-grade-level reading groups based on teacher opinion and using the instructional level criteria by Betts. The subjects had three and one-half years or prior training in either DRA or DRTA. Twelve lessons as outlined in the teachers' manuals were taught during a two-week period in each community by the experimenter with an observer present. Twenty-four lessons, twelve using DRA and twelve using DRTA, were taught and transcribed for both groups; each pupil response was coded on the Quality of Pupil Response Scale by two trained raters. The findings of this study indicated that the DRA and DRTA are two distinctly different group directed reading strategies. The DRTA proved profitable as a teaching strategy with pupils reading above grade level and also allowed readers to do more critical thinking. Based on the findings, the DRTA appeared to be the superior directed reading lesson. (WR)

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QUANTITY, QUALITY, AND VARIETY OF PUPIL RESPONSES DURING AN OPEN-COMMUNICATION STRUCTURED GROUP DIRECTED READING-THINKING ACTIVITY AND A CLOSED COMMUNICATION STRUCTURED GROUP DIRECTED READING ACTIVITY

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This study investigates the quality, quantity, and variety of pupil responses while using two different group directed reading procedures, the Directed Reading Activity (DRA) and the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA), found in basal readers. According to both Austin and Morrison (2) and Steward (14), ninety percent of the elementary schools in America rely on the basal readers to develop sound reading and thinking skills. Such universal acceptance seems to justify an examination of their validity and effectiveness of the methodology they advocate.

Theoretical Framework

In 1944, Betts (3) named the procedure which he found in most basal manuals a DRA and suggested that it be used by teachers since it had been experimentally appraised and time-tested. Recently, Chall (4) concluded that most manuals continue to suggest a four-part DRA. These parts are as follows: (1) Preparation for the story, (2) Presentation of new words,

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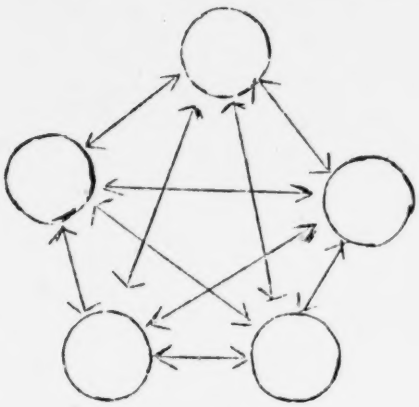
(3) Guided reading and interpreting the story, and (4) Follow-up activities.

A different type of directed reading procedure appeared with the publication of the Winston Basic Reader Series. Stauffer (12, 13) changed the usual DRA to a DR-TA and outlined the DR-TA in five steps: (1) Identification of purposes of reading, (2) Adjustment of rate of reading to the purposes declared and to the nature and difficulty of the material, (3) Observation of the reading, (4) Development of comprehension, and (5) Fundamental skill training activities, discussion, further reading, additional study and/or writing.

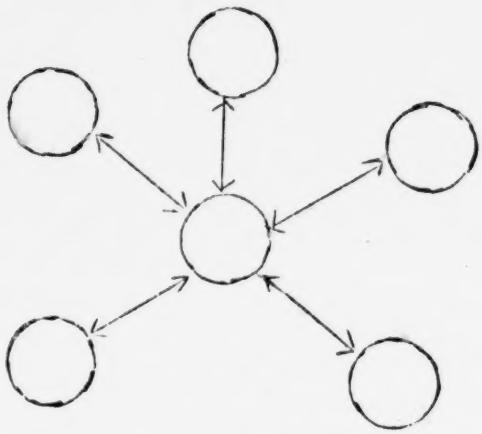
The DRA and DR-TA, when examined carefully, establish contrasting teaching-learning situations. The DRA creates a stimulus-response condition in which the teacher differentiates rewards to the reader for right or wrong answers after he has read a specific passage. On the other hand, the DR-TA establishes a learning setting where the hope of discovery and the discipline of accuracy rest between the reader and the passage read. Therefore, the learner uses his cognitive power as well as the auditorship of his participating peers throughout the reading lesson.

The studies of the social psychologists contrast the difference between the DRA and the DR-TA by monitoring the interaction network each creates. Table I shows the two communication patterns established by a DRA or a DR-TA.

Table I - The Communication Structure Of A Group Created From An Open- Or A Closed Interaction Network



ALL-CHANNELS-OPEN



CLOSED-WHEEL OR STAR

The DRA is a closed wheel or star interaction in which the teacher becomes the central, authoritarian figure while the students assume peripheral positions. The monitored interaction shows a Teacher-Pupil--Teacher-Pupil interaction. The DR-TA establishes an all-channels-open network which causes an interaction pattern of Teacher-Pupil--Pupil-Pupil. Thus, the role of the teacher becomes one of organizer, moderator, and intellectual agitator while the students become active participants in the group process.

The study focused on pupil reaction in response to materials read during both the DRA and the DR-TA group reading strategies. Previous studies found that such reactions are related to prior instruction in general reading and thinking skills (5, 6), age (1), general intelligence (8), attitudes and values (9). However, the most important variable is the nature of the questions posed for reaction (11, 15, 16) in the teaching-learning situation. Thus, using a scale constructed by Wolf, et al. (16), pupil responses for quantity, quality, and variety may be recorded and analyzed during the two group directed reading activities.

Procedure

All fourth graders in two nearby communities were arrayed into above-grade level, at-grade level, or below-grade level reading groups based on teacher opinion using the instructional level criteria by Betts. One community used only a DRA procedure while the other community used only a DR-TA method. Thus, the subjects had three and one-half years of prior training in either a DRA or DR-TA. Four groups containing three girls and two boys were selected randomly in both communities for each of the three reading levels. This made 120 subjects arranged into twenty-four groups of five subjects each with both communities having two groups above-grade level, two groups at-grade level, and two groups below-grade level.

Twelve lessons as outlined in the teacher's manuals were taught during a two-week period in each community by the experimenter with an observer present. Two groups above, two at, and two below grade level in each community were taped while being instructed in a DRA as outlined in the 1967 edition of the Scott Foresman Series. Similar groups in each community were taped using a DR-TA as present in the 1960 edition of the Winston Basic Reader Series. The twenty-four lessons were transcribed and each pupil response coded on the Quality of Pupil Response Scale (16) by two trained raters. Two fifty-random samples were used to compute rater reliability using the Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation. A mean correlation of .86 was obtained and considered significantly reliable.

A 2 x 2 x 3 x 2 design was used with the main effects and dependent variables shown in Table II.

Table II - Statistical Main Effects, Dependent Variables and Their Definitions

I. Main Effects	Definitions
A. Population	Two nearby school districts, one used a DRA Strategy, while the other used a DR-TA Strategy
B. Level	Above, at, and below fourth grade instructional level
C. Method	Directed Reading Activity on a Directed Reading-Thinking Activity
D. Sex	Number of boys and girls in each group
II. Independent Variables	
1. Quantity of Responses	The total number of responses appearing in any of the five categories on the Ohio Scale
2. Quantity Controlled Responses	The first twenty-five pupil responses in each lesson
3. Quality of Responses	Those responses appearing in levels four and five on the Ohio Scale
4. Quality Controlled Responses	Those responses made in the first fifteen minutes of each lesson
5. Variety of Responses	Total number of responses appearing in any of five categories on the Ohio Scale

Findings and Discussion

Analysis of variance procedures, analyzed at the Computer Center of the University of Delaware with tests at the .05 level of significance, allowed the following observations to be made:

1. There is no significant difference with respect to population in this study between the means of the five dependent variables. Prior instruction in the all-encompassing strategy of a DRA or a DR-TA made no difference for pupil responses of quantity, quality, or variety.

2. There is a significant difference with respect to population between the means of the dependent variable of quality for the interactions of level versus population and for level versus population versus method. This study suggests that prior instruction in the DR-TA allows readers to make superior responses of quality.
3. There is a significant difference between the means of below grade, at grade, and above grade reading levels for each of the dependent variables. No matter whether students are reading below, at, or above-grade level, they profit from a DR-TA. The DR-TA appears especially to be a most useful strategy for above-grade level readers.
4. There is a significant difference at the .01 level with respect to methods between the means of the dependent variables. The DR-TA and DRA are two distinctly different group-directed reading strategies. The DR-TA strategy produced more quantity, higher quality and greater variety of pupil responses no matter whether the pupils had prior instruction in the procedure or not.
5. There is no significant difference with respect to sex between the means of the dependent variables. Both sexes participated equally well during either a DRA or a DR-TA.

Implications

The findings of this study suggest that the DRA and the DR-TA are two distinctly different group directed reading strategies. Thus, each should be assessed for their validity and effectiveness. Using pupil responses while reading as a criteria, the DR-TA is superior to the DRA because it allows

more pupils to interact with each other, to use critical thinking and reacting skills, and to participate in a greater variety of thinking tasks. This is true no matter if pupils are reading below, at, or above grade level. Thus, a DR-TA group directed reading strategy is a distinct, profitable reading procedure for classroom instruction.

The DR-TA proved particularly profitable as a teaching strategy for pupils reading above-grade level. Few classroom procedures are suggested in the literature for above-grade level readers; however, the DR-TA appears to be both a practical organization as well as a profitable group reading experience for this type of student.

The DR-TA also allows readers to do more critical thinking. Previous studies cite that students beginning in grade one can and should be taught to think and to read critically. To date, there is no practical and long-term classroom-teaching strategy to accompany such findings and recommendations. The DR-TA is such a strategy since it is easily applicable to daily classroom usage and allows pupils to become both critical thinkers and critical readers.

Within the limitations of this study, two different group directed reading procedures were investigated as to the quality, quantity, and variety of pupil responses while using the procedures. The DRA, although suggested in many basal reader manuals, needs additional examination. The DR-TA appears the superior directed reading procedure.

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